(b) To prevent the accidents and to improve the status of safety in mines, following measures are being taken by the coal companies:-

Thrust on training and retraining of workmen, supervisors and managers to increase safety awareness.

- Issue of guidelines for safer operations in identified thrust areas through circulars.
- Promoting participation of workers in safety management.
- Promoting self regulation by management.
- Tri-partite and Bi-partite review of safety status at various levels.
- Observance of safety week and safety compaigns.
- Generating safety awareness and information dissemination.
- National Conference on Safety in Mines.
- National Safety Awards.
- Interactions at different forums with a view to promote safety, health and welfare of persons employed in mines.
- Introduction to the concept of Risk Assessment, preparation of Safety Management Plan and development of Emergency Response System.
- Facilitating introduction of new technology in mining with low potential risk.

Post Offices closed in Gujarat

†1897. SHRI JAYANTILAL BAROT:
SHRI LEKHRAJ BACHANI:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the aim of Department of Posts is to provide services or to earn profit;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) the number of post offices which have been closed in Gujarat during last five years and the reasons therefor, and

(c) whether Department of Posts has any plan to appoint any agent at those places where post offices have been closed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) The Department of Posts is classified as a Departmentally run commercial undertaking of the Government of India. Therefore, while it is required to fulfil the Universal Service Obligation of increasing the customers access to basic postal services, it is also expected to be financially self-sufficient. This is clearly spelt out in the policy directives of the Tenth Five year Plan.

(d) Details of Post Offices closed down in Gujarat during the last five years along with reasons is given below:

Year	Post Offices closed	Reasons for closure
2000-01	01	Non-payment of Non-Recoverable Component
2001-02	05	Non-payment of Non-Recoverable Component
2002-03	01	Non-payment of Non-Recoverable Component
2003-04	Nil	Not applicable
2004-05	Nil	Not applicable

(c) The Department has plans to provide postal services through more cost effective means, including through franchised agents. However, implementation of such schemes will depend on the parameters fixed for appointment of such agents, selection of location etc. under the scheme.

Provision of rural telephones in Gujarat

†1898. SHRI JAYANTILAL BAROT:
SHRI LEKHRAJ BACHANI:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that rural telephones are not being made available by private phone companeis (Basic Operators) in certain districts of Gujarat;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.